

VANCOUVER PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 1383 03353 1669

Poems

IT-CAN-REF

321

432p

FOR REFERENCE

NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THIS ROOM

LIB 78-MLH-70

for reference:

not to be
taken from
this area

vancouver
public
library

7B

POEMS


by

NELLIE SCOWCROFT



Fare you forth, O little stranger,
Dressed and laden with your burden;
Wait no longer on the threshold,
Bravely set out on your journey,
Feet reluctant, knowing surely,
Once you go there's no returning:
Though your faring may be brief,
Little stranger, fare you forth.

*Yours truly
Nellie Scowcroft*



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024 with funding from
Vancouver Public Library

<https://archive.org/details/31383033531669>

AFTER A SHOWER

Walked I in my garden,
Lovesome bower,
Incense sweet ascended,
Holy hour;
Heads all reverent bended,
Leaf and flower,
Thanking their Creator
For a shower.

NANCY'S CHARM

In Elizabethan Fashion

My Nancy's hair is soft and fine,
With rippling waves that glint and shine;
A glowing halo circling round—
A face as fair as can be found;
With azure ribbon lightly bound,
My Nancy's hair.

So truant strand is held demure,
When teasing zephyr seeks to lure.
From underneath her ringlet bright,
Peeps coyly out a pendant sprite,
A gleaming gem enslaved to light
My Nancy's hair.

If I could be the ribbon blue,
Or captive jewel glistening through,
So proudly would I touch its gold,
So gently would my love be told,
Caressingly would I enfold
My Nancy's hair.

THE VIOLIN
(A Sonnet)

A thing of wooden parts together glued,
With taut-drawn vibrant strings from end to end;
Peculiar box-like shape, designed to lend
Its harmonies a fuller magnitude.
Dumb does it lie, although with song imbued,
The bow beside it eager to attend;
No one its potency can apprehend,
Till master-hand dispels its silent mood.
Ah! then the soul of it awakes to sing,
With fervent warmth and passion soaring free,
Provoking feet to dance in merry ring,
Or hands to clasp in silent ecstasy;
Perchance to high resolve inspire a King,
And so affect a people's destiny.

APRIL
(Song)

April is a little girl
With tears in her eyes—
A dear, timid, wee thing
Fearful of surprise.

April is a dainty maid
With laughing, happy eyes,
Rejoicing in the buds and flowers
And birds in blue skies.

April is a lady fair,
Whose eyes both smile and weep,
With gentle fingers waking up
The gardens from their sleep.

REWARD IS SURE

Remove or bury deep that which defiles,
Then make a garden bloom;
Blend effort with desire, win Nature's smiles,
See life emerge from tomb.

Consider and provide for fern and flower
Leaf shade or warming light;
To seasons too give heed, destructive power
Of frost and wind and blight.

Put there your faith and love—rich nourishment,
Support, control and guide:
Working or resting there brings sweet content
And thankful, humble pride.

And what a trysting-place for harmonies
Of colour, sound and thought!
Friends of familiar face, unseen and seen,
Will commune there joy-fraught.

No fractious, sordid thoughts may entrance gain,
The quiet mind to snare;
Reward is sure, no matter how engaged,
With spade or book or prayer.

REMEMBERING

What is your past? Is it
A chaos of regret—a blank
Of waste endeavour—a vain
Search for happiness, in ignorance
Of what true happiness consists?
Is it a hollow, empty cavern
Wherein the hopes of youth
Were voiced, and lost themselves
In echoes only—or a night
Of radiant dreams, all fading
With the sun's returning? Is it
A spectre who, in life's declining,
Rises to mock a late-born hope?

Or is your past, perchance, a glowing volume
Whose many pages you delight in turning?
This brings a memory to cheer the present—
This a warning—
This wakes anew a song of praise
And thankfulness.
Here is a page all shining
With proud ambitions realized.
Yes, here and there are pages not in keeping—
Almost effaced by penitential tears,
But used as stepping-stones to higher spheres.

Not all are fair,
But in His wise decreeing,
These served to bring you back
To peace again.

Ah! pictures of the past, what power
Within your silent page reposes,
To stir the soul with bitterest agony,
Or fill the spirit with serenity.

Before today shall change into tomorrow,
Choose well the colours for your canvas fair;
Some will be sombre—all may not be bright,
But let them blend in strength and purest light.
Remembering that, some day, looking back
Across the days that now are fleeting by,
You will find in memories a choice possession,
A pearl of richest price.

LOOK OUT AT YOUR WINDOW

“Look out at your window, my dear!”
I have been looking out and now am withdrawn,
For I saw but the lowering, grief-stricken sky
Weeping its heart out in sad, sullen rain;
Hopeful young plants beaten down to the ground,
And green growing-things bending battered and bruised;
Lovely flowers that were blooming, their petals all shed,
Lying scattered around them, sodden and dead—
Only heaviness, dreariness greeted my sight,
And I sighed to my soul: “It’s a picture of life!”

“Look out once again, did you say?”
I see rifts in the clouds and the blue showing through;
Silver mists changing place with the drab and the gray—
Now the sun reaching down, lifting each drooping crown,
Seems whispering hope of fulfilment and cheer;
Waiting buds are unfolding, fresh flowers to bring
And a gay feathered choir is beginning to sing.
Such a sweet-perfumed incense ascends like a prayer—
Contentment and thankfulness now reigning there.
Ah! my soul, this is life—quiet peace follows pain—
I am glad I looked out at my window again!

FIT FOR A KING

Snowy cloth so smoothly spread,
Cups and saucers gleaming,
Posy culled from sunny glade,
Pleasant faces beaming;

Foamy milk in pitcher tall,
Well-filled sugar basin,
Piled up plates of bread-and-butter
White and brown and raisin;

Plate of seed-cake, ginger cookies,
Dish of damson jam;
In his place of state sits Father,
Serving home-boiled ham.

Goddess of the feast is Mother,
Smiling deity,—
In the midst of all the chatter,
Quietly pouring tea.

CAPRICE

Dance, little leaves,
The skies are blue,
Soft winds have come
To play with you.

Sway, little branches,
In noon's warm glow,
The breezes are tossing you
To and fro.

Bend, little boughs
At evensong,
A rude, rough wind
Is coming along.

Bow down, little tree,
The sky's overcast,
A galloping gale
Goes whistling past.

Bow down, little tree,
Your proud young head,
Some twigs may be snapped,
Some leaves be shed;

But morning will dawn,
All fresh and new,
And the sun will kiss
And comfort you.

IDLE THOUGHTS ON THE SEASHORE

The sea today is gray and cold;
With stern precision, fold on fold,
It greets the shore and turns away,
No time to linger or to stay.

Before the waves in happy play,
Jostling and pushing through the spray,
Like merry children having fun,
Crowds of chattering pebbles run.

And sodden logs that once were trees
Erect and fearless in the breeze,
Now listless lift and roll and slide,
Pale, ghostly playthings of the tide.

This moving scene with no surcease
May weary some, to some bring peace;
Of laws immutable it tells
In waves and stones and clean seashells.

HOW COULD I KNOW?

FATE brought to me her wares:

I thought she smiled,
When, from her store, I chose
What most beguiled;

And singing on my way,
In gleeful pride,
I went, for many a day,
Quite satisfied.

But ways, not always smooth,
With many a turn,
Brought doubt and wonderment,
And much to learn.

My choice—had it been best?—
I can but wait
Until I reach the end,
And trust to Fate.

A GARDEN IN SPRING

My neighbour has an oak tree,
Its branches, broad and high,
Make lacy patterns, exquisite,
Against the changing sky.

My garden has no leafy boughs
Where birds may make a home;
But when they want a holiday,
To see my flowers they come.

A perky sparrow skips about
Peck-pecking here and there,
He chirps, "Of all this food about,
I ought to have my share."

A tiny seed, just getting up,
Now spies him near her bed;
She quickly draws the covers up
And tucks them round her head.

A robin hops about the grass;
Snatch! pull! out comes a worm—
Ah! poor old thing, you are caught this time,
I'm not surprised you squirm.

From every flower, a humming-bird
His feast of honey sips,
Then flies away and leaves them with
His kisses on their lips.

Young plants are learning how to grow
Young birds to nest and sing—
A garden is a busy place,
Especially in Spring.

TO THE MEMORY OF DONALD A. FRASER
1875 - 1948

And now the allotted span being run,
He has laid aside, for our disposing,
The garment of his spirit.
Worn and thin it was
But still becoming,
And we loved him in it.

Freed now from clinging fold of cloak familiar,
With buoyant step we see him faring on,
New clad, his eager face smile-lighted,
Expectant of his hopes' fulfilment:
Our grateful loving thought goes with you,
Adieu and fare-you-well, dear friend.

HAIL AND FAREWELL!

KENNETH

June 26th, 1915-1936

What!

Twenty-one!

Oh, surely not,

Why only yesterday, my son,

You were a tiny tot.

Eyes

Wide and bright,

Blue as the skies,

The world you had come to visit in

Was full of sweet surprise.

Hair

Silken soft,

So smooth and fair,

And all the gold of Christendom

I thought lay prisoned there.

Such

Trusting hands,

So warm and soft,

Caressing, patting, clinging fast,

With loving touch.

To love

And to be loved

Seemed all your need;

Rich dower indeed you brought from that

Fair other-world above.

How

Swiftly by

The years have flown;

I can't believe, my tall, straight son,

You are grown to manhood now.

Launch
If you must,
And sail away;
We are "standing by" with love and trust,
Proud that the vessel's staunch.

* * * * *

April 29, 1938

He's gone!
With hand on helm and sail unfurled,
Away to that fair other-world
From whence he came.
A backward glance, a wistful turn,
Then fearless steered straight toward the dawn,
Beyond our sight . . . to that far bourne
From whence, they say, none may return.
Yet often when the mind is still,
The heart at peace, the soul attune,
His gentle presence hovers near,
I feel his touch, his voice I hear,
And though his form I do not see,
I know he comes to visit me.

ALL'S WELL

A frown, a sigh, a tear,
And smiles again;
A grief, a moan, a sob,
And peace again;
The gentle rain that falls
From eye or sky,
Is Nature's remedy,
And clouds go by.

MAN'S DIGNITY

In a long-ago garden, abode of God,
Mankind was fashioned out of the sod.
Front for courage, back for the load,
Head for dreaming, feet for the road.
And the Maker smiled beholding there
His own true image, strong and fair.
Then a spark out-leaping, lightning-shod,
Fused the heart of mankind with the heart of God.
Here, He said, is my temple, here will I dwell,
My sceptre wield from this citadel.
And all down the ages, in peace or in strife,
God has breathed in mankind the breath of life.

SWEET RENDEZVOUS

"I love wallflowers," you said,
Holding a fragrant spray—
"You'll always see me stoop
To smell a wallflower!"—Ah!
Was it knowing how soon you would leave us,
And sensing the ache of longing,
Made you speak of a rendezvous
At the shrine of so sweet a flower?
For now when it blooms in the garden,
We think of you bending low,
Loving it, breathing its perfume,
Waiting to greet us there.
And longing to feel your presence—
To look into your eyes—
We also stoop and stooping
Keep loving tryst with you.

RARE GIFTS

Ah yes! he goes my way,
Almost I had forgot;
I'll wait and walk with him,
And grudge it not,
The slackened pace,
The interrupted thought.
"Hi there! good-morning!
How are you to-day?"

* * *

"Good! that's the stuff!
Yes, thank-you, I'm O.K."

* * *

"Well, here's where we part,
Good luck!"

"Good-day!"

* * *

What others have to bear,
We never know.
I couldn't smile
If I'd his row to hoe.
For just about a mile
I shared his woe,
Yet, going on my way,
I am richer, even so;
He has given me courage for the day,
Strength and uplift—
I hope I left with him
Some little gift.

